Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 35-42, 45, 47, 49-52, 54-55, 58-59 and 68. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1-34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) An isolated aldonic acid ester of ~~polysaccharides or~~ an optionally substituted polysaccharide ~~derivatives which are selectively oxidized at the reducing end of the chain to aldonic acids~~.

36. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the ~~polysaccharides or~~ optionally substituted polysaccharide ~~derivatives are~~ is an ~~starch fractions or~~ optionally substituted starch fraction ~~derivatives~~.

37. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the starch fraction[[s]] ~~are~~ is an amylopectin degradation fraction[[s]].

38. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 37, wherein the amylopectin degradation fraction[[s]] ~~are~~ is obtained by acid degradation and/or degradation by α- amylase of waxy corn starch.

39. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the starch fraction[[s]] has ~~have~~ an average molecular weight (MW) of 2000-50 000 Dalton and an average branching of 5-10 mol% α- 1,6-glycosidic linkages.

40. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the starch fraction[[s]] has ~~have~~ an average molecular weight (MW) of 2000- 50 000 Dalton and an average branching in the range of ~~greater than~~ 10 to 25 mol % α - 1,6-glycosidic linkages.

41. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the optionally substituted starch fraction ~~derivatives are~~ is hydroxyethyl ~~derivatives~~ fraction of waxy corn starch degradation fractions.

42. (Currently Amended) The aldonic ester as claimed in Claim 41, wherein the average molecular weight (MW) of the hydroxyethyl starch fraction[[s]] is in the range of 2-300 000 Dalton, and the substitution level molar substitution (MS) is between 0.1 and 0.8, and the C2/C6 ratio of the substituents on carbon atoms C2 and C6 of the anhydroglucoses is between 2 and 15.

43. (Previously Presented) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35 wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived has a molecular weight in the range from 80 to 500 g/mol.

44. (Previously Presented) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived has a pKa in the range from 6 to 12.

45. (Currently Amended) The aldonic ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived ~~, of the aldonic acid ester,~~ includes an HO-N group or a phenol group.

46. (Previously Presented) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived is selected from N-hydroxysuccinimide, sulfo-N-hydroxysuccinimide, substituted phenols and hydroxybenzotriazole.

47. (Currently Amended) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 46, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived is a N-hydroxysuccinimide [[and]] or sulfo-N-hydroxysuccinimide.

48. (Previously Presented) A solid comprising at least one aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35.

49. (Currently Amended) A solution ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of at least one aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35.

50. (Currently Amended) The solution as claimed in Claim 49, wherein the solution ~~comprises~~ has at least one organic solvent.

51. (Currently Amended) The solution as claimed in Claim 50, wherein the solution ~~comprises~~ has not more than 0.5% by weight water.

52. (Currently Amended) The solution as claimed in Claim 49, wherein the solution ~~comprises~~ has at least one aprotic solvent.

53. (Previously Presented) The solution as claimed in Claim 52, wherein the solvent is dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), N-methylpyrrolidone, dimethylacetamide (DMA) and/or or dimethylformamide (DMF).

54. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for preparing an isolated aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein at least one optionally substituted aldonic acid ~~and/or one aldonic acid derivative~~ is reacted with at least one alcohol component in aprotic solvent.

55. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the alcohol component is employed in 5 to 50-fold molar excess based on that optionally substituted aldonic acid ~~and/or the aldonic acid derivative~~.

56. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the reaction takes place with the use of at least one activating reagent.

57. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the activating reagent comprises at least one carbodiimide.

58. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the activating reagent is employed in 1- to 3-molar excess based on the optionally substituted aldonic acid ~~and/or the aldonic acid derivative~~.

59. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein a compound which liberates an alcohol component for reaction with the optionally substituted aldonic acid ~~or the aldonic acid derivative~~ is employed.

60. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 59, wherein a carbonic diester is employed.

61. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the reaction takes place at a temperature in the range from 0 to 40°C.

62. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the reaction takes place at a low base activity.

63. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing pharmaceutical active ingredients coupled to polysaccharides or polysaccharide derivatives on free amino functions, wherein at least one aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35 is reacted with a pharmaceutical active ingredient which has at least one amino group.

64. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the reaction takes placed in aqueous medium.

65. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the pH of the aqueous medium is in the range from 7 to 9.

66. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the reaction takes place at a temperature in the range from 0°C to 40°C.

67. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the pharmaceutical active ingredient is a polypeptide or a protein.

68. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical active ingredient which is coupled to an optionally polysaccharides ~~or polysaccharide derivatives~~ and is obtained by the method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the pharmaceutical active ingredient is

denatured in anhydrous medium and enters into unwanted side reactions with carbodiimides, such as inter- and intramolecular crosslinking or reaction with phosphate groups of the pharmaceutical active ingredient.